6.	Profit + Liquidity Optimising	(1) Managing Director, Bokaro Steel Plant (2) Director (Finance) SAIL
7.	Fully utilise In-House Assets	(1) Managing Director, Indian Iron & Steel Company Ltd.

Respective working groups have already submitted their recommendations, and implementation of the same has started.

Changes in Mining Lease

2451. SRHI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted a Committee to recommend the changes in mining lease and prospecting license aimed to curb illegal mining;

(b) if so, the terms of reference of the Committee;

(c) whether the Committee has submitted its recommendations; and

(d) if so, the main points of recommendations of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. The Central Government constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of the then Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Government of India with Mining Secretaries of State Governments of Orissa, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Assam and Himachal Pradesh, Secretary General, Federation of Indian Mineral Industries and Controller General, Indian Bureau of Mines etc. as members. The terms of reference of the Committee are appended as Statement *(See* below). The Committee has submitted its report to the Government which, inter-alia. includes strengthening of the penal provisions for curbing illegal mining. Further necessary action for amendment in the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and Rules made thereunder has already been initiated.

Statement

The terms of reference of the Committee Constituted under the Chairmanship of the then Secretary (Mines) to Review Mining Rules and Procedures.

(i) to consider and suggest further delegation of powers to the State Governments regarding grant/ renewal of Prospecting Licence/ Mining Lease and other related approvals under the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and the Rules made thereunder;

(ii) to review the existing laws and procedures governing regulation and development of minerals and to suggest steps to make them compatible with the changed policies;

(iii) to review the existing procedures pertaining to grant/renewal of Prospecting Licences/Mining Leases and to suggest measures to reduce delay in this regard at the levels to State Governments and the Central Government; and

(iv) to suggest measures to prevent illegal mining.

Bungling in the supply of Hard Coke

2452. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have detected large scale bungling in the purchase/

supply of hard coke to the Hindustan Zinc Ltd., Udaipur Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details of the supply of low grade hard coke going on for the last eight years;

(c) the action being taken/had been taken to bring the culprits to book; and

(d) the details of the assessed loss suffered by Government on account of such bungling?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (d) No, Sir. However, Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL) has reported that some procedural lapses have been detected in supply of coke for the Lead Smelter, Tundoo (Dhanbad). The Company has informed that the following remedial measures have been taken :—

(i) A procedural order has been issued streamlining the system so that such procedural lapses may not recur in future.

(ii) One officer has been suspended and three officers have been chargesheetcd.

Cost Reduction Measures Adopted by SAIL

2453. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether SAIL have initiated cost reduction measures to overcome its financial burden and to mobilise additional resources for modernisation of its plants;

(b) if-so, the details of measures taken in this regard;

(c) whether the SAIL propose to have joint venture with some MNCs to bring down losses of each plants; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Since 1997-98, SAIL had put greater thrust on cost control by bringing operational efficiency and reducing administrative expenses, resulting in savings of about Rs. 700 crores in 1997-98 in areas like use of coking coal, stores & spares, power & fael, improvement in techno-cconomic & productivity parameters and administrative expenses etc. Plans have been drawn for further cost saving during 1998-99.

(c) and (d) SAIL plans to formulate subsidiary companies/joint ventures for non-core areas. However, this is in preliminary stage.

Funds to Modernise IISCO

2454. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "Indo-Russian Panel suggests use of ESCROW funds to modernise IISCO" in the Financial Express, dated 2nd December, 1998; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto and the present status of the revival of IISCO through the joint venture between SAIL and T.P.E., Moscow?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) In the 5th Session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission, held in November, 1998, in Moscow, it was. inter-alia, agreed to between the two sides that they would work towards reconstruction/modernisation of *The* Indian Iron & Steel Company Limited (IISCO) through a Joint Venture between Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and Tyazhpromexport (TPEj The modalities, to make this operational have been initiated.